

Coastal Technical Assistance

The Virginia Coastal Program has used its funding to enhance the state's ability to manage coastal resources by supporting coastal technical professionals in Tidewater planning district commissions and local governments, as well as in state natural resource agencies.

Environmental Impact Review and Federal Consistency

Projects occurring in Virginia's Tidewater area, or Coastal Zone, must be consistent with Virginia's Coastal Resources Management Program. The Virginia Coastal Program provides funding for positions in the Office of Environmental Impact Review (EIR), located in the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

The primary function of EIR is to coordinate the State's response to the environmental impacts of proposed state and federal projects. Project proposals are distributed for review to state agencies, planning districts and localities for comment. After considering all comments received, EIR prepares a single state response. EIR receives the following types of environmental impact statement documents: federal environmental impact statements and environmental assessments; state environmental impact reports; operating and expansion permits for public airports or landing fields; environmental documents pertaining to the exploration and extraction of minerals on state-owned lands; and environmental impact statements for application for drilling permits in the Tidewater area. Highway projects are handled exclusively by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

*Virginia Department of Environmental Quality,
Contact: Tom Felvey, 804.698.3416
Current Ongoing Activity
1992 - 1996 Task 3*



Local Environmental Planning Assistance Program

Environmental planning assistance is provided through this program to local governments in portions of Virginia's coastal zone. This expertise is particularly important given the current rate of development in the coastal area, the current demands placed on local government staff, and the resource constraints faced by many localities. Planning assistance is made available through a network of local government liaisons who are assigned to work with Tidewater localities. The range of technical assistance provided through this network includes help in preparing local zoning, subdivision, erosion and sediment control, stormwater management ordinances, and comprehensive plans. The program also provides advisory review and comment to local governments on proposed private development projects.

*Virginia Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department
Contact: Scott Kudlas, 804.225.3440
1992 Task 4, 1993 Task 4, 1994 Task 9, 1995 Task 8, 1996 Task 6
(Until 1992, Local Planning Assistance Component housed at the Virginia Council of the Environment -
1986 Task 1, 1987 Task 3, 1988 Task 3, 1989 Task 3, 1990 Task 4, 1991 Task 4)*



Coastal Technical Assistance

Virginia Marine Resources Commission Permit Compliance and Inspection

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) is the Coastal Program's core agency responsible for issuing permits on encroachments in, on, or over state-owned submerged lands. The Commission has had this regulatory authority since 1962, and currently processes approximately 2,000 applications, and issues nearly 500 permits annually. Virginia is only one of six "low-water states" and as such maintains ownership of all submerged lands channelward of the mean low water mark in tidal waters, and regulatory authority channelward of the ordinary high water mark on most naturally occurring nontidal perennial streams, creeks and rivers. In addition to managing the 1,472,000 acres of submerged lands, the Commission also regulates the use or development of tidal wetlands and coastal primary sand dunes pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 13 and 14 of Title 28.2 of the Code of Virginia. Local governments in Tidewater Virginia have the option of adopting and locally administering wetlands and dune zoning ordinances. VMRC maintains original jurisdiction in localities which have not adopted ordinances. Even if ordinances are locally adopted and implemented, the Commission retains certain oversight responsibilities and reviews all decisions made by local wetlands boards.

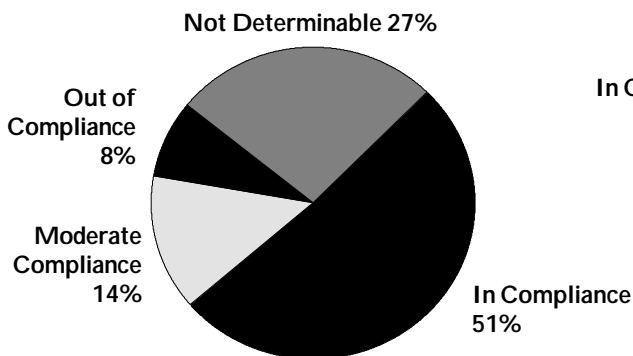
The Coastal Program has provided funding for the above VMRC activities since 1987. Funding began with the support of clerical positions, which concentrated on permit processing and historic permit data entry. In 1991, a study showed the need for strengthening permit compliance monitoring policies. The General Assembly then granted VMRC the authority to issue restoration orders and to assess civil charges, and VMRC began the development and implementation of a new permit compliance inspection program. Additional environmental engineers, funded by the Coastal Program, were hired to carry out this work. Since the new authority measures and compliance program were put in place, compliance has increased significantly. In 1989, a random check of projects found only 51% in compliance; by 1993, inspections revealed 80% of all projects to be in compliance. VMRC is currently working towards the goal of determining cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal development. The first step in making this determination is to geographically reference all permits. This work is underway.

*Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Contact: Tony Watkinson, 804.247.2255
Current Ongoing Activity Since 1987*

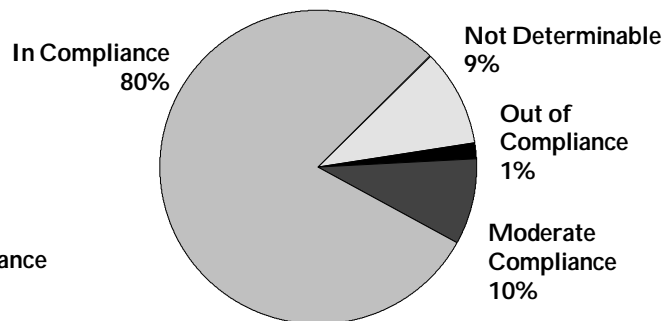
1992 Task 9, 1993 Task 17, 1994 Task 22, 1995 Task 13, 1996 Task 19



Inspections of VMRC Permits



Inspections since 1993 of all VMRC permits following notification that projects had been started.



Inspections for randomly selected projects including wetlands and VMRC subaqueous permits issued in 1989.

Data Source for Graphics: Virginia Marine Resources Commission Permit Compliance and Inspection Report, October 1996

Coastal Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance by Planning District Commissions

From 1986 until the FY 97 grant year, the Coastal Program allocated a portion of its award from NOAA to its eight planning district commissions in support of regional coastal technical assistance programs. Virginia's Tidewater planning district commissions include: Accomack-Northampton PDC, Crater PDC, Hampton Roads PDC, Middle Peninsula PDC, Northern Neck PDC, Northern Virginia PDC, the Rappahannock Area PDC (RADCO), and Richmond Regional PDC.

This technical assistance included various activities coordinated or provided by the PDCs to their member localities. Funding also supported technical research and regional cooperative planning studies and initiatives at the PDC. The continuing nature of the PDC Technical Assistance Program enabled the eight coastal PDCs to develop permanent staff expertise in coastal and related environmental resource issues. Examples of past and current program activities at the coastal PDCs include: cooperative regional programs in stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, wetlands identification, and GIS development. The success of these programs is such that many localities in the PDCs are now supporting expanded programs with significant local funding.

The PDCs provide technical assistance to local governments in areas such as comprehensive plan and ordinance development, resource development and management planning, project and environmental impact reviews, grant writing, and GIS development. PDCs coordinate participation in state agency activities, such as the development of state tributary strategies. Regional assistance enables many localities to pursue more innovative and cooperative approaches.

The PDCs support a variety of training activities for local government officials, citizens, industry, environmental organizations, and civic groups in the above-mentioned programs. The PDCs also serve as information clearinghouses and environmental impact reviews.

Northern Virginia Planning District Commission
Contact: David Bulova, 703.642.0700
1990 - 1996 Task 31



Crater Planning District Commission
Contact: Victor Liu, 804.861.1666
1990 - 1996 Task 335



Rappahannock Area Development Commission
Contact: Sandra Rives, 703.373.2890
1990 - 1996 Task 32



Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
Contact: Jim Uzel, 804.758.2311
1990 - 1996 Task 36



Northern Neck Planning District Commission
Contact: Stuart McKenzie, 804.529.7400
1990 - 1996 Task 33



Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Contact: John Carlock, 757.420.8300
1990 - 1996 Task 37



Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Contact: Larry McCarty, 804.358.3684
1990 - 1996 Task 34



Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission
Contact: Jim McGowan, 804.787.2936
1990 - 1996 Task 38



Coastal Technical Assistance

Local Government Wetlands and Environmental Compliance

Local government positions have been funded by the Coastal Program to assist localities in efforts to ensure compliance with local environmental programs. These programs primarily include tidal wetlands protection, erosion and sediment control, stormwater and floodplain management, site plan review and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act activities. Two of these positions serve a regional area. The benefits of a regional environmental position includes: 1) flexibility to respond to the varying and changing needs of the county or counties served; 2) an ability to identify regional needs as well as local needs; 3) the sharing of ideas, methods and experiences between counties or localities; 4) an efficient transfer of information among counties or localities; and 5) an increased number of site inspections and more consistent follow-up of noncompliance. These local environmental positions have also assisted in the coordination of regional environmental educational activities, including tidal wetlands training, and erosion and sediment control training. They have also helped improve interaction between state agencies and local government officials and citizens.

The Northern Neck, a four-county region, is served by a Wetlands Engineer who rotates between the land use offices in Lancaster, Westmoreland, Northumberland and Richmond counties. The other Wetlands Engineer serves the Middle Peninsula counties of Essex, King and Queen and King William. The third position, an Environmental Enforcement Specialist for Middlesex County, supplies not only the types of assistance discussed above, but also provides technical support to the local Wetlands Board.

Wetlands Engineer

Essex, King & Queen, King William

Contact: Gary Allen/Brian Wagner, 804.443.4331

1992 Task 53, 1993 Task 54, 1995 Task 57, 1996 Task 53

Wetlands Engineer

Northern Neck Planning District Commission/Lancaster County

Contact: Bill Pennell/Josie Wold, Lancaster County Administrator, 804.462.5129

1993 Task 61, 1994 Task 62, 1995 Task 63, 1996 Task 56

Environmental Enforcement Specialist

Middlesex County

Contact: Charles Culley, Middlesex County Administrator, 804.758.4330

1993 Task 58, 1994 Task 59, 1995 Task 61, 1996 Task 58

